LANDS LEASED OUT FOR CULTIVATION OF HILL PADDY—PARTICULARS REGARDING

60. Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Nellayi):*

Will Government be pleased to state.—

(*a*) whether the Forest Department leased out lands for the cultivation of Hill Paddy last year;

(*b*) if so, what was the extent and the amount realised as lease amount?

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):*

(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Extent: 3,117 ½ acres;

Rent realised	..	Rs.	798	12 0
Pending realisation	..	Rs.	882	2 0
Total	..	Rs.	1,680	14 0

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Nellayi):* Were all the 3117½ acres cultivated?

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* Yes.

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Nellayi):* Is the cultivation very successful?

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* That cannot be said.

Mr. T. A. Ramachandra Ayyar *(Nellayi):* And Government had not to spend a pie on it except realising this Rs. 1,680?

Mr. S. Venkiteswaran *(Conservator of Forests):* Government realised this and it had not to spend anything.

Official Resolution—*(cont.)*

Noon-day meals to children attending Primary Classes—*(cont.)*

Rao Sahib I. N. Menon *(Director of Public Instruction):* Mr. President, Sir, in the course of the discussion yesterday, it was pointed out by some Hon'ble Members that Government ought to bear the entire cost of providing meals for children attending elementary schools. Some other Hon'ble Members who were quite willing to accept my resolution wanted further details about the working of the Central Committee, which has already been constituted and of the local committees which are only in the process of formation. I pointed out that the matter being extremely urgent the most important thing to-day was to fortify ourselves with the necessary amount of funds and then start working in centres where destitution was most obvious and the need most urgent. I hope to be able to furnish the Hon'ble Members of this House and the public generally with all the necessary details which they wanted yesterday regarding the working of these committees, only one of which has already been constituted and the others are awaiting formation. I am sure the Government will have no objection to publishing in the Gazette the rules governing the working of these local committees, the way in which the funds collected by the several committees are spent, the way in which the balance is to be pooled and kept in reserve for distribution from time to time. It is obviously impossible for me at this stage to give any detailed description of the way in which we are going to proceed, but the Hon'ble House may be confident that the Government have no intention of simply coming and asking for a grant and not keeping them informed of the working and the distribution of this fund. With regard to the amendment to the effect that this House recommends to Government that they should bear half the cost of the noon-day meal proposed to be given to these children, my objection is a practical one. There is no intrinsic reason why Government should not bear a larger proportion of the expenditure. The reason, as I said, is a practical one. This is a proposal which is extremely novel at any rate as regards India. We are the first in the field, and like all pioneers, whatever may be the outcome, it has got its perils and before we commit a public authority like the Government to expend large sums of money, we ought to be quite certain that we have explored all the possibilities of philanthropy and munificence in the country before we go up to them and ask them to undertake this commitment. Some Hon'ble Members almost declined to proceed with the discussion of this resolution because they heard it whispered, or shouted as it was said, from some corner of the Treasury Bench, that there was a possibility of additional taxation. Well, is that not, Sir, an additional reason why we should not ask for a 50 per cent grant from the Government. As matters stand as far as I can see, if the grant is limited to a third of the actual expenditure, it may not be necessary to resort to fresh taxation.

Mr. A. V. Moothedan *(Chalakkudi):* Who will decide the question whether taxation is necessary, this House or the Government?

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